

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 OMB-01 RSR-01 /101 W
----- 113848

R 041032 Z MAY 73

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9556

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: RETIRED AIR MARSHALL MOVES TO LEFT, AGGRESSIVELY

REF: LAHORE 0452

1. RETIRED AIR MARSHALL ASGHAR KHAN HELD PRESS CONFERENCE IN LAHORE MAY 3 AT WHICH HE ISSUED LENGTHY STATEMENT ATTEMPTING TO SQUEEZE HIS TEHREEK- E- ISTIQLAL IN BETWEEN FAR LEFT AND PPP. WHILE IN SOMEWHAT LESS BELLICOSE TONE THAN HIS APRIL 27 STATEMENT REPORTED REFTEL, ASGHAR STILL CLEARLY IN AGGRESSIVE MOOD.

2. AIR MARSHALL SAID PRESIDENT BHUTTO WANTED HIM MURDERED BECAUSE BHUTTO WANTED TO JOIN INDIA IN CONFEDERATION AND HE (ASGHAR) WOULD NOT ALLOW IT. RULING PARTY WARNED HIM THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SECURE AT PUBLIC MEETING IN PUNJAB, BUT HE CHALLENGED PRESIDENT TO HOLD PPP MEETING WITHOUT FULL FORCE OF GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING ARMED FORCES, TO KEEP MEETING SECURE. GOVT HAD DECIDED IT COULD NOT PROVIDE HIM WITH PROTECTION, THEREFORE HE WOULD ARRANGE HIS OWN PROTECTION SO THAT GOVT WOULD BE UNABLE TO KEEP HIM FROM MASSES.

3. ON SUBJECT OF YOUNG TEHREEK WORKER JAVED NAZEER, WHO DIED
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MAY 2 AFTER BEING SHOT IN CLASH WITH PPP WORKERS ON APRIL 29, ASGHAR CALLED MURDER BARBARIC, BUT SAID ONLY MADMAN WOULD ATTEMPT RETALIATION IN PRESENT STATE OF COUNTRY. HE EXPLAINED HE HAD NOT ATTENDED FUNERAL BECAUSE HE CONSTANTLY FOLLOWED BY ARMED MEN AND HE HAD RECEIVED TIP THEY INTENDED TO KILL HIM AT FUNERAL.

4. MOST OF REST OF STATEMENT EMPHASIZED REVOLUTIONARY CHARACTER OF TEHREEK, NECESSITY FOR DRASTIC ECONOMIC REFORMS, AND ATTACKS ON PPP FOR NOT LIVING UP TO ITS PROMISED REFORMS. ASGHAR SAID PPP AFRAID OF TEHREEK BECAUSE PPP PARTY OF CAPITALISTS AND LAND OWNERS, WHILE NO VESTED INTERESTS IN ASGHAR'S PARTY. ONLY ANSWER FOR MASSES WAS DESTRUCTION OF CAPITALISTIC SYSTEM AND PPP. IN REPLY NEWSMEN'S QUESTIONS, ASGHAR HINTED THAT REBEL PPP MNA'S WOULD JOIN HIM. HE SAID TEHREEK HAD BEEN RIDICULED BECAUSE IT HAD NO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATION, BUT THIS WOULD SOON BE CHANGED. HE WENT ON TO PRAISE INDIVIDUAL PPP REBELS.

5. COMMENT: ASGHAR'S FLASHES OF HOT TEMPER AND SUBSEQUENT INTEMPERATE LANGUAGE MAY BE SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT TO SOME OF HIS POTENTIAL POLITICAL ALLIES, BUT HIS NATURAL REPUTATION AND STATURE WOULD SERVE THEM WELL. HIS EMPHASIS ON NECESSITY OF ECONOMIC REVOLUTION MAY WELL BE RESULT OF HIS TALKS OVER PAST WEEK WITH REBEL PPP LEADERS, SEVERAL OF WHOM ARE ORIENTED TOWARDS MORE DRASTIC REFORMS, AS WELL AS AN ATTEMPT TO PLACE HIMSELF IN A POLITICAL POSITION DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO THIS MORE RADICAL FACTION OF PPP.

DECONTROL DEC 31, 1973.

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